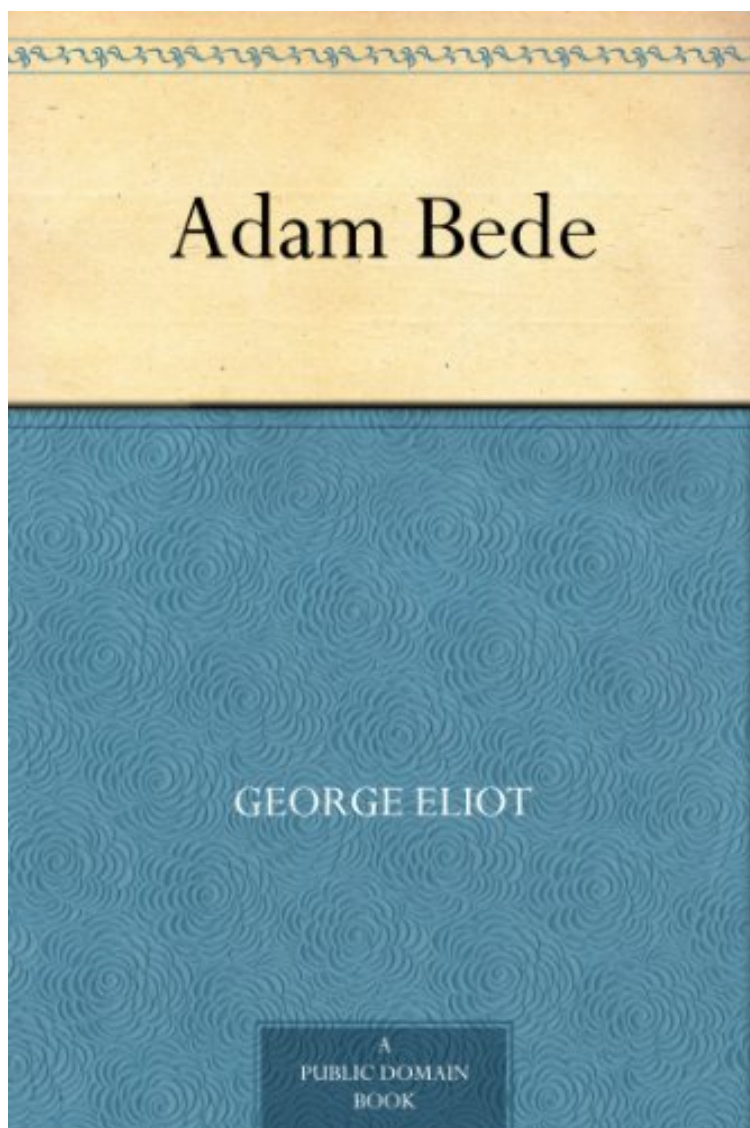


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# Adam Bede (English Edition)



*Par George Eliot*  
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Prsentation de l'diteurThis book was converted from its physical edition to the digital format by a community of volunteers. You may find it for free on the web. Purchase of the Kindle edition includes wireless delivery.ExtraitCHAPTER I The WorkshopWith a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799.The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. A scent of pine-wood from a tent-like pile of planks outside the open door mingled itself with the scent of the elder-bushes which were spreading their summer snow close to the open

window opposite; the slanting sunbeams shone through the transparent shavings that flew before the steady plane, and lit up the fine grain of the oak panelling which stood propped against the wall. On a heap of those soft shavings a rough grey shepherd-dog had made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his nose between his fore-paws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. It was to this workman that the strong barytone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer singing Awake, my soul, and with the sun Thy daily stage of duty run; Shake off dull sloth. . . . Here some measurement was to be taken which required more concentrated attention, and the sonorous voice subsided into a low whistle; but it presently broke out again with renewed vigour. Let all thy converse be sincere, Thy conscience as the noonday clear. Such a voice could only come from a broad chest, and the broad chest belonged to a large-boned muscular man nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work, he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeve rolled up above the elbow showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long supple hand, with its broad finger-tips, looked ready for works of skill. In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon, and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly marked, prominent, and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood. The face was large and roughly hewn, and when in repose had no other beauty than such as belongs to an expression of good-humoured honest intelligence. It is clear at a glance that the next workman is Adams brother. He is nearly as tall; he has the same type of features, the same hue of hair and complexion; but the strength of the family likeness seems only to render more conspicuous the remarkable difference of expression both in form and face. Seths broad shoulders have a slight stoop; his eyes are grey; his eyebrows have less prominence and more repose than his brothers; and his glance, instead of being keen, is confiding and benignant. He has thrown off his paper cap, and you see that his hair is not thick and straight, like Adams, but thin and wavy, allowing you to discern the exact contour of a coronal arch that predominates very decidedly over the brow. The idle tramps always felt sure they could get a copper from Seth; they scarcely ever spoke to Adam. The concert of the tools and Adams voice was at last broken by Seth, who, lifting the door at which he had been working intently, placed it against the wall and said There! Ive finished my door to-day, anyhow. The workmen all looked up; Jim Salt, a burly red-haired man, known as Sandy Jim, paused from his planing, and Adam said to Seth, with a sharp glance of surprise What! dost think theest finished the door? Ay, sure, said Seth, with answering surprise, whats awanting tot? A loud roar of laughter from the other three workmen made Seth look round confusedly. Adam did not join in the laughter, but there was a slight smile on his face as he said, in a gentler tone than before Why, theest forgot the panels. The laughter burst out afresh as Seth clapped his hands to his head, and coloured over brow and crown. Hoorray! shouted a small lithe fellow, called Wiry Ben, running forward and seizing the door. Well hang up th door at fur end o th shop an write ont, Seth Bede, the Methody, his work. Here, Jim, lends hould o th red-pot. Nonsense! said Adam. Let it alone, Ben Cranage. Youll mayhap be making such a slip yourself some day; youll laugh o th other side o your mouth then. Catch me at it, Adam. Itll be a good while afore my heads full o th Methodies, said Ben. Nay, but its often full o drink, and thats worse. Ben, however, had now got the red-pot in his hand and was about to begin writing his inscription, making, by way of preliminary, an imaginary S in the air. Let it alone, will you? Adam called out, laying down his tools, striding up to Ben, and seizing his right shoulder. Let it alone, or Ill shake the soul out o your body. Ben shook in Adams iron grasp, but, like a plucky small man as he was, he didnt mean to give in. With his left hand he snatched the brush from his powerless right, and made a movement as if he would perform the feat of writing with his left. In a moment Adam turned him round, seized his other shoulder, and pushing him along, pinned him against the wall. But now Seth spoke. Let be, Addy, let be. Ben will be joking. Why, hes i the right to laugh at me. I canna help laughing at myself. I shant loose him, till he promises to let the door alone, said Adam. Come, Ben, lad, said Seth in a persuasive tone, dont lets have a quarrel about it. You know Adam will have his way. You mays well try to turn a waggon in a narrow lane. Say youll leave the door alone, and make an end ont. I binna frightened at Adam, said Ben, but I donna mind sayin as Ill lett alone at yare askin, Seth. Come, thats wise of you, Ben, said Adam, laughing and relaxing his grasp. They all returned to their work now; but Wiry Ben, having had the worst in the bodily contest, was bent on retrieving that humiliation by a success in sarcasm. Which was ye thinkin on, Seth, he began the pretty parsons face or her sarmunt, when ye forgot the panel? Come and hear her, Ben, said Seth, good-humouredly; shes going to preach on the Green to-night; happen yed get something to think on yourself then, instead o those wicked

songs yere so fond on. Ye might get religion, and that ud be the best days earnings y ever made. All i good time for that, Seth; Ill think about that when Im agoin to settle i life; bachelors doesnt want such heavy earnins. Happen I shall do the coortin an the religion both together, as ye do, Seth; but ye wouldna ha me get converted an chop in atween ye an the pretty preacher, an carry her aff? No fear o that, Ben; shes neither for you nor for me to win, I doubt. Only you come and hear her, and you wont speak lightly on her again. Well, I n half a mind t ha a look at her to-night, if there isnt good company at th Holly Bush. Whatll she tek for her text? Happen ye can tell me, Seth, if so be as I shouldna come up i time fort. Willt be, What come ye out for to see? A prophetess? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophetessa uncommon pretty young woman. Come, Ben, said Adam, rather sternly, you let the words o the Bible alone; youre going too far now. What! are ye a-turnin roun, Adam? I thought ye war dead again th women preachin, a while agoo? Nay, Im not turnin noway. I said nought about the women preachin: I said, You let the Bible alone: youve got a jest-book, hant you, as youre rare and proud on? Keep your dirty fingers to that. Why, yare getting as big a saint as Seth. Yare goin to th preachin to-night, I should think. Yell do finely tlead the singin. But I dun know what Parson Irwine ull say at s gran favright Adam Bede a-turnin Methody. Never do you bother yourself about me, Ben. Im not a-going to turn Methodist any more nor you are though its like enough youll turn to something worse. Mester Irwines got more sense nor to meddle wi peoples doing as they like in religion. Thats between themselves and God, as hes said to me many a time. Ay, ay; but hes none so fond o your dissenters, for all that. Maybe; Im none so fond o Josh Tods thick ale, but I dont hinder you from making a fool o yourself wit. There was a laugh at this thrust of Adams, but Seth said, very seriously, Nay, nay, Addy, thee mustna say as anybodys religions like thick ale. Thee dostna believe but what the dissenters and the Methodists have got the root o the matter as well as the church folks. Nay, Seth, lad; Im not for laughing at no mans religion. Let em follow their consciences, thats all. Only I think it ud be better if their consciences ud let em stay quiet i the church theres a deal to be learnt there. And theres such a thing as being over-speritual; we must have something beside Gospel i this world. Look at the canals, an th aqueducts, an th coal-pit engines, and Arkwrights mills there at Cromford; a man must learn summat beside Gospel to make them things, I reckon. But t hear some o them preachers, youd think as a man must be doing nothing all s life but shutting s eyes and looking whats a-going on inside him. I know a man must have the love o God in his soul, and the Bible s Gods word. But what does the Bible say? Why, it says as God put his sperrit into the workman as built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things as wanted a nice hand. And this is my way o looking at it: theres the sperrit o God in all things and all times weekday as well as Sunday and i the great works and inventions, and i the figuring and the mechanics. And God helps us with our headpieces and our hands as well as with our souls; and if a man does bits o jobs out o working hours builds a oven for s wife to save her from going to the bakehouse, or scrats at his bit o garden and makes two potatoes grow istoryad o one, hes doing more good, and hes just as near to God, as if he was running after some preacher and a-praying and a-groaning. Well done, Adam! said Sandy Jim, who had paused from his planing to shift his planks while Adam was speaking; thats the best sarmunt Ive heard this long while. By th same token, my wifes a-bin a-plaguin on me to build her a oven this twelvemont. Theres reason in what thee sayst, Adam, observed Seth, gravely. But thee knowst thyself as its hearing the preachers thee findst so much fault with as has turned many an idle fellow into an industrious un. Its the preacher as empties th alehouse; and if a man gets religion, hell do his work none the worse for that. Ony hell lave the panels out o th doors sometimes, eh, Seth? said Wiry Ben. Ah, Ben, youve got a joke again me as ll last you your life. But it isnt a religion as was i fault there; it was Seth Bede, as was allays a wool-gathering chap, and religion hasna cured him, the mores the pity. Neer heed me, Seth, said Wiry Ben, y are a downright good-hearted chap, panels or no panels; an ye donna set up your bristles at every bit o fun, like some o your kin, as is mayhap cliverer. Seth, lad, said Adam, taking no notice of the sarcasm against himself, thee mustna take me unkind. I wasna driving at thee in what I said just now. Some s got one way o looking at things and some s got another. Nay, nay, Addy, thee meanst me no unkindness, said Seth, I know that well enough. Theet like thy dog Gypthee barkst at me sometimes, but thee allays lickst my hand after. All hands worked on in silence for some minutes, until the church clock began to strike six. Before the first stroke had died away, Sandy Jim had loosed his plane and was reaching his jacket; Wiry Ben had left a screw half driven in, and thrown his screw-driver into his tool-basket; Mum Taft, who, true to his name, had kept silence throughout the previous conversation, had flung down his hammer as he was in the act of lifting it; and Seth, too, had straightened his back, and was putting out his hand towards his paper cap. Adam alone had gone on with his work as if nothing had happened. But observing the cessation of the tools he looked up, and said, in a tone of

indignation,Revue de presseSuperb scholarly edition of Eliot's Adam Bede ... An indispensable purchase for all academic libraries and large public libraries (Choice)Key to this volume is the 158-page introduction, which is full of erudition, packed with information, and concludes with a descriptive listing of editions of Adam Bede (Choice)